

The Argument vpon the Epistle of S. Paule to Philemon: by Erasmus of Roterodame.



His Philemon (after the Greekes writing) was a Phrygian
borne, whiche nacion of people is untractable & haughty,
as the Greekes owne projecte makereth often mention:
Stripes make the Phrygian to amende. And yet Paul
recommenid this Philemon one of his speciall frendes, by
cause of his godlynes & diligence done to þayntes. And a
seruant of his one Onesimus had runne away fro him
to Rome, and had therulshipe stollen somewhat from him,
as seruauntes are for the moste parte vsed to doe. There whan he had hearede
Paule, who at that tyme was in bondes, he received the doctrine of the gospel,
and serued Paule in prison. But lest the master shold be vexed in his mynde
for his seruauntes runnyng away, he sendeth him home agayne, & with
a wonderfull diligence and curiositie, he reconciled unto the Master
his seruant that had bene both, a runnagate and a piker, and
offred hym selfe to be swerte to make good what souer he
had piked at his runnyng away. This Epistle he
wrote from the prison by the sayd Onesimus
whom he also calleth
his sonne.

Thus endeth the Argument.

The paraphrase of Erasmus ^{150.111} vpon the Epistle of S. Paule to Philemon.

C The i. Chapter.

Paule the prisone^r of Christ & brother Timothee. Unto Philemon the beloued, and
my helper, and to the beloued Appia, and to Achippus myrte folakter, and to the ^{The text}
congregation that is of the house. Grace be unto you and peace from God our father, &
from the Lord Iesus Christ.



Aule before this tyme an Apolite and servante of Jesu Christ and nowe his prisone^r also: for whiche shoulde not I be glad to be hys prisone^r, for whose gospelles sake I weare these bondes: not for the punishment of any culpe that I haue done, but as a notable badge of a free & dauncynt preacher: and also my felowe gospelpreacher, brother Timothee, unto Philemon in the proffession of the conuentine faith a brother, singulerly worthy to be beloued: and not a brother onely but also my companion in very many affaires & partaker in the office of the gospel: to his wyfe Appia, my mooste welbeloued sister as concernyng the kynde of fath: to Achippus our felowe soulakter and to the rest of the congregation whiche is at his house: Grace be unto you and peace from God oure comune fath: & frō his sonne the lord Iesu Christ.

I thanke my god, making mercē alwayes of the in my prayers, when I bare of thy ^{The text} loue and feyth, whiche thou hast towardes the Lord Iesu, and towardes all saintes, so that the felowshipe of thy feyth is frutful in the knowledge of every good (woorke) whiche is in you tow arthe Iesu Christ. for we haue great hope and consolacion in thy loue because that by thē (brother) the saintes heires are comforted.

In my prayres wherwith I am accustomed to sacrifice daylye unto God, I tendre thankes unto him alwayes on thy behalfe. for I ascribe it thankfully unto him, that I haue spoken openly of all men, that is to say, both the pudentesse, & thy ryght gospele charitte, which I bearest towardes the lord Iesu: & not towardes hym onyl, but also towardes al saintes, & is to wete, his mebrē unto who what so euer is bestowed, hys wyl is to recle it doone to hym self. And this I also beseche him, to augment his mercifulnes upon thee, & that this thy feyth, whiche is not sole in the, may expresse his powre dayly more & more, & to enforce the wth plentousnes to reue me a mo, so þ there be no office of christian charitte but that thou maye be both acquaynted and tried in it. The thynges that thou hast hitherto done already, occasion vs to conceave a moe sure confidence in thee, that we dare be holde to recken vpon the in matters of greater weyghte. for whan I doe consider that all that Christians haue are commune, I am not a litle joyous, and even in these afflictions it was no smal conforte to me, that thou (o my brother) wast so ready to deserue well of al men, by meanes of thy loue, wherwith thou hast refreshed the saintes hearter that are afflicted with the sorowes of this wold. for in thy doing thou declardest thy selfe to be a ryght brother.

Wherfore, though I myght be holde in Christ to commande thee, that whiche was ^{The text} thy bewyfe to boþ fer for loues sake I rather beseche the, though I be as I am, even olde Paul, and now a prisone^r of Iesu Christ. I beseche the for my sonne Erasmus whom I haue begotten in my bondes (whiche in tyme passed was to the unprofitable but nowe profitable both to the and to me) whom I haue sent home agayne. Thou therefore receue hem, that is to say, myn owne bowels, whom I woulde sayne haue rayned in

The paraphrase of Erasmis vpon the Epistle

me, that in thy grace he myght haue ministred unto me in the bondes of the ghesprell. Neuerthelie, without thy mynde woulde I haue nothing, that the good whiche thou doest shoulde not be as it were of necessarie, but wylfully.

Wherfore hauyng the experiance of these so many matters, whereby thou declarest thy selfe to be a true folower of Christ, I trusted exceedinglye, that I myght obteyne of the what I wyl, albeit I comandued the only, as the fater his sonne, and as an Apostle his disciple, namely in a matter of it selfe indifferent and agreeable to the gospelles doctrine, that thou professeſt: whiche comandudeth, that we by experiance felynge the mercye of the Lorde in forgyuyng our debte, shoulde lykewyl forgyue other, yet I had rather to obteyne this at thyne handes by charitie, than by myne authoritie: and I woulde rather desir the, as one brother desyret another, than comandunde the as a master his scholat. And thou shalt not disdayne suche a despyour. For in what thyng caſt thou ſave me ſape that I desyre ther̄ea even I, lyke Paule (whan I ſpeak of Paule, I meane maters vnto the that are not ſmall) then an olde man. And muche is wonche to be graunted to a man for his age ſake. But thys geare is no nouelties to thee. And nowe also a p̄ſlonet. And in making of deſpyes even the miferie of the beſechet hath no ſmall weight. Last of al, I am the p̄ſlonet of Chylde Iesu. And to ſuche a p̄ſlonet all ought to beare their fauour that professe the doctrine of Chylde. To a man that desyreteth by ſo manye wayes thou couldest not ſave nay, althoughe he ſhoulde entreate the for anye man. But nowe I entreat thee for my ſonne, whom I loue ſo muche the more tenderly, that I begate him not vnto Moſes, but vnto Chylde, not to the world but to the ghesprell; þea and I begate hym in my bondes nowe whan I ſhall ſhortely goe out of this woldē. For parents are wonche to loue their chyldren more inw̄tely, whom they begate in their extreme olde age. This is eten Onesimus, that in tymes past whan he had robbed his maſter runne awaye frome hym,itel agreeably to hys owne name, that is to ſete, proſtytable and truſte, nowe is cleane chaunged into an other ſort, and ſhal not only be truſty for thy profyte herafter, but also he was proſtytable to me wyth hys ſervyce in p̄ſlon. Therfore I ſende him to the home agayne, for nowe he is become an other man. And if thou be the man, that I trust thou art: and if olde Paule the prisoners commendacion standeth of any effecte with the, thou ſhall receyue Onesimus, not nowe as a tunneagate ſervauant, but as the thynges that I ſet moost ſtoode by, and my ſingularly welbeloued ſonne. It is agaynſt my wyl that I ſende him home agayne. For I had rather kepe hym ſyll with me, if it were but for this cauſe, that he ſhoulde repreſent thee vnto me in these bondes. For I doubt not, but in asimuche as thou ſhewest ſo muche charitie towardes all others for the ghesprells ſake, thou woldest in caſe thou were here, inuifte also to me in these bondes, wherewith I am tyed for the gospelles ſake. But note he is founde vnsought for, by whom thou mayſt minifter vnto me beynge absent thy ſelfe. Howbeit I woulde do nothing without thyne aduife, leſt þt in bſing myne auothtie I ſhoulde do it upon myne owne head, althoughe thou wouldest haue taken my deſte in good parte, yet thy well doynges ſhoulde haue the leſſe commendacion, þt it ſeimes to be loyned with any neceſſtie. Now I ſent him home agayne, ſo as it maye be in thy choyle eþer to kepe hym ſtill with the, or to ſende him to me agayne. If thou ſende him agayne, thy doynges ſhall haue ſo muche the more prayſe, in that it is not enforced but freely done
and

and of thyn obwe npudel.

For happily he therefore departed for a season; that thou shouldest.....one him for certe,
not now as a seruant; but about a seruant, even a brother beloued, specially to me: but
how much more unto the, both in þ fleshe, & also in þ se; & þt þ collic me therfore a felon,
terrene hym as my leste. If he haue done the any hurt, or owest the oughte, þ laye to my
charge, (þ Paul haue wryt it in mine own hand) I wyl rechpenet le. So þ I do not lag
to the, þt thou owest unto me tunc thine owne selfe alse. But so (wylt) let me chayp
þt in þ lord. Closset my bondes in the lord. I rulyngh in thyng obedient, I wyl onto the,
knowyng þt thou wyl also be merte thys cap. Moreover, prepare me lodgynge: for I cruse
þtborow the helpe of your prayres, I shalbe genera unto you. Ther saluteth the, Epaphras
my celowe pypsoner in Chal. Ic. ii, Euacius, Aciscus, Demas, Lucas, my helpers. The
grace of our Lord Jesu Christe be with your spide. Amen.

The text;

Doe not thyng upon his ryntynge aware. He hath recompensed the fault
of his fletynge with his wel doryng, he hath washyd it away by baptisme, he hath
done it away w teares. And how wootest þ whether it come so to passe by þ off-
pensation of Gods prouidence, & his faulc might turne to good both to vs & to
him? The iudgements of god be secret. Perchaunce he was for this purpole ta-
ken away fro thee for a season, þ for a leeuant being but for a season (for bond
froure endurethe no longer than for tyme of lyfe) thou myghtest receyue him
for certe. It is for certe wharsouer the gospel bryngeth forth, & that þ shoul-
dest receive him agayne now not as a bond seruant but as a most deare brother.
Cruld unto me that am an Apostle, he is bothe a brother and most dearely be-
loved bþþther, for the commune faithes sake, which maketh vs clike in Christ:
for the commune inheritance sake wherunto we are called indifferently clike:
for the commune fathers sake, for the commune redemers sake, in whiche all
there is no difference betwene the lorde and the seruant, betwene the maister
and the scholar. And yf he for these causes be unto me most dearely beloued, w
whome I haue nothyng commune sayng the kyndred of the spirit, how much
more ought he to be most dearely beloued unto the, unto whom besydes the bo-
des of the spirit, he is also royned after þ fleshe: Thou woldest lone a stra-
gier, if thou seest him become such a one as Onesimus is: But nowe thou
halte loue him for this respects that wher he is of thine obwe housholde, he
is proued such a one as he is. And yf thou vouchesake to haue me to be thy co-
panion in the ghopcels affaires, thou must take him agayne as it were I my
selfe. For I loue him as my most deare sonne, as my highly beloued brother, &
as partaker of my bondes and of the ghoppell. Other thou must cast of both
or hertly loue both. What he hath bene afors tyme it besemeth not to reherce
after he is baptised. Suppose him to be a newe man newly boorne agayne unto
the. But if the losse of any thing greue the wherof thou woldest haue amedes,
before thou forgyue hym take me suetyng for him. Requiere it of me, whatso-
ever he hath eyther hurt thet or owest thee. I bryde my livelitte unto the by
this my hande wrytynge. Loe thou haste this Epistle written with my betye
obwe hande. Yf thou thinkes me a trusty suettie, leate Onesimus alone, go to
latoe with me. I shal paye the agayne in his behalfe, whatsoever he oweþ the:
Thus muche I could obteyne (I thinke) yf I had to do with any other man:
I am not disposed to reherce at this preset, what I might justly require of the
by myne obwe autoritie. For I wyl not make rehersall here, that inasmuch as
thou arte become a christian man by my doctrine, thou owest me not only that
that thyng is, but also thine obwe selfe. Muche lesse wronȝ thou oughtest to
reken it

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recken it , yf I woulde requite the to so; gyne me, what soueret losse it be that Onesimus oweþ the, howbeit I despze not that, oules shou wilte wyllyngly and of thyne owne mynde forgeue it, not so muche to set my p̄omise at libertie, as that thou shoudest declare thy charitie. Wel goe to: my brother Onesimus hath his name of fruiction, who , lyke as I loue hym dcrely , and as I woulde with al myne heit haue hym prayzed vnto the, so let it be my chancie to haue þ fruiction of thee, not after the maner as among the communne people, a frend is glad of his frende, but so as an Apostle is ioyous of his disciple that expresteth the doctrine of Christ. Thou seest how hartely I loue Onesimus, and he hath wel deserved that I shoulde loue hym. Therfore receyue hym, & make my heire merci. Hecin I trouble the with to muche a doe, not that I put any diffrynt in thy charitie, but I do it vpon a certayne abundance of loue that I beare vnto my sonne. Soz in dede, I knowe thyne obediencie so throughtlye well by thyne olde diligent doinges, that I doubt not but thou wilte doe more in this behalfe than I require of the. And in the meane whyle receyue Onesimus gentil eue as my pledge, and also prepare me lodgyng agaynst I come, whiche shall not be long after. Soz I trust that God throught he yowre prayers wil once before me raygne vnto you. And then I shall presently thanke the for thy gentil receyving of Onesimus . Epaphras thy countreyman saluteth thee, whiche is my felow in preson and in bondes, for Christ Jesuſ sake. Also roties Marcus Aristarchus, Demas, & Lucas my felowes in office. And imagine that they all beseeche the for Onesimus as I doe.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be always
wyth your sp̄ite : Amen.

¶ Thus endeth the Paraphrase vpon the
Epistle to Philemon.